

July 9, 2026

Dear Columbia Lakes Residents,

The Varner Creek Utility District (VCUD) Board of Directors is writing to provide information regarding an important issue affecting the long-term condition, funding, and maintenance of the roads within Columbia Lakes.

As many residents are aware, the roads in Columbia Lakes require significant investment to remain safe, reliable, and sustainable for the future. At this time, road ownership and responsibility are tied to the Columbia Lakes Homeowners Association (HOA). While the HOA has worked to address road-related needs over time, the scale and cost of full road replacement and long-term maintenance require a funding structure that is more durable than HOA assessments or short-term repairs.

For VCUD to finance a comprehensive road replacement program, road powers must be transferred from the HOA to VCUD. Under Texas law, a utility district with approved road powers may design, acquire, construct, finance, issue bonds for, operate, and maintain roads and related improvements. This authority would allow VCUD to pursue bond financing for major road reconstruction rather than relying solely on HOA funding mechanisms.

The proposed transfer would provide several important benefits to Columbia Lakes residents:

- Establish a long-term public financing option for road replacement through VCUD-issued bonds, subject to all required approvals and voter authorization, if applicable.
- Create a more structured approach to ongoing road maintenance and capital planning.
- Help spread the cost of major road improvements over time rather than requiring a large one-time funding burden.
- Place road stewardship with a political subdivision that is subject to public meeting, financial reporting, election, and accountability requirements.

An important consequence of transferring road ownership and responsibility to VCUD is that Columbia Lakes would need to become a non-gated community. Because VCUD is a political entity, roads owned, financed, operated, or maintained by VCUD must function as public roads rather than private HOA-controlled roads. This means access could no longer be restricted through private gates in the same manner as it is today.

The Board understands that the gated nature of Columbia Lakes is important to many residents, and this potential change should be carefully considered. At the same time, the current road conditions and the long-term cost of replacement and maintenance require a practical and financially responsible solution. Transferring road powers to VCUD would create a pathway to fund and manage the roads in a way that better supports the community over the long term.

No final action will be taken without appropriate public discussion, legal review, engineering input, and resident communication. VCUD intends to provide additional information regarding the process, potential costs, anticipated timelines, and any required approvals in a special called joint meeting with both the VCUD and CL HOA BOD on July 22, 2026 at the West Columbia Civic Center at 6:30pm.

We encourage all residents to stay informed, ask questions, and participate in upcoming discussions. The goal is to protect the long-term value, safety, and functionality of Columbia Lakes while being transparent about the tradeoffs involved.

Sincerely,

Varner Creek Utility District Board of Directors